



Attendance Policy

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1. Introduction

Good attendance is important because:

1. Research shows that students with good attendance are more likely to gain higher grades and to be able to move on to their chosen destination in the future.
2. When students move on to further education and their future career, they will be expected to demonstrate a high level of attendance. Without this, they may lose their place or job.
3. Students will gain the maximum benefit from the opportunities offered by Malden Oaks if they attend regularly and consistently.

2. Our Unique Approach to Promoting Good Attendance

Malden Oaks provides education for students who are unable to attend a mainstream school due to a range of circumstances. Because of this, the curriculum and environment has been specifically designed to meet students' social, emotional and mental health needs.

Many students may have experienced poor mental health at some point in their education. This may be connected to a pre-existing diagnosed medical condition and/or triggered by external circumstances. Regardless of the cause, our approach is to optimise the school environment to promote resilience and positive mental health.

Our staff have undertaken substantial evidence-based research in order to understand and respond to students' mental health needs. Positive mental health depends upon a high level of personal resilience. This is the ability to try new things, overcome difficulties, recover from disappointments and approach all challenges positively and in a solution – focused way.

In order to build this resilience, students need to have frequent exposure to the following opportunities, which we call the 'Four As'.

ALTRUISM

Students need to experience helping others, so that they 'feel good by doing good'. This is a highly effective method of improving an individual's mental wellbeing.

Examples of opportunities offered at school:

- Volunteering in local primary schools and allotments

- Participating in environmental projects
- Supporting their peers within the school e.g. welcoming new arrivals, working collaboratively during practical lessons.
- Supporting their peers in group activities during Duke of Edinburgh sessions
- Making a contribution to the school through student voice activities
- Helping with open evenings and other school events
- Supporting Operation Christmas Child
- Taking food donations to local Food Banks

Examples of opportunities at home / in the community:

- Volunteering in a local charity shop or other community group
- Having a regular responsibility at home
- Caring for younger children or older relatives
- Looking after a pet

AUTONOMY

Students need to feel in control of their own lives. They need to exercise power over their own decisions, 'doing' rather than being 'done to'. This gives them a feeling of strength rather than helplessness.

Examples of opportunities offered at school:

- Independent learning e.g. SAM Learning, Mathletics
- Making decisions about practical projects e.g. in Art, Textiles or Catering
- Contributing to displays/school environment
- Making suggestions via student voice activities
- Choosing curriculum enhancement opportunities

Examples of opportunities at home / in the community:

- Completing work on SAM Learning/Mathletics/ Mathswatch
- Shopping for and cooking a meal for the family
- Planning a route to an unknown place using public transport

ACHIEVEMENT

This sense of satisfaction in having overcome a challenge, or made / created something, or learning something, gives each individual a boost. Achievement is personal – it doesn't have to be about 'winning' or being competitive.

Examples of opportunities offered at school:

- Stickers (based on the 4 As) awarded in books and/or on wall displays
- Photographs of participation in vocational courses on the tutor room wall
- Creating a successful dish in catering, or a piece of Art or Textiles
- Being nominated for a Jack Petchey award
- Completing GB Boxing awards
- Achieving AQA awards and GCSEs

- Weekly students of the week and termly attendance and achievement points awards
- Achieving parts of the D of E Award

Examples of opportunities at home / in the community:

- Watching a quiz show and getting some answers right
- Learning how to do some DIY or decorating
- Achieving awards at a sports club

ATTACHMENT

This is a very powerful and vital emotion – feeling a part of a group. It is very important that everyone has a personal network. We need to promote positive communities – otherwise students may seek to be part of different groups that may have a negative influence on them.

Examples of opportunities offered at school:

- Being a member of a tutor group or teaching group
- Undertaking the D of E skills, physical or volunteering section with your tutor/teaching group
- Going on a theatre trip/visit to a place of interest with a group
- Taking part in a D of E expedition
- Post placement support from transition teacher
- Cooking meals to share with others
- Nurture approach to the KS3 curriculum

Examples of opportunities at home / in the community:

- Join a group e.g. sports club, scouts, cadets
- Have a dedicated evening when everyone in the house sits down for a meal together

The Malden Oaks' curriculum has been designed to engage and motivate students so that they are excited and enthusiastic to attend school. The approach to the curriculum is based on the following principles:

- All students will have access to the core subjects of English, Maths and Science
- Alongside these, they will study a range of academic and vocational options relevant to their age, interests and aspirations.
- At KS3 this will include Science, History, Geography, PE, PSHE, Outdoor education, Citizenship, Volunteering, Art, Computing and Catering
- At KS4 this will include all of the above plus Textiles, Sociology, French, Spanish, English Literature and Child development as well as off-site courses in Construction, Motor Vehicle and Hair & Beauty
- The curriculum will be delivered by qualified, experienced subject specialists.
- Lessons will be engaging, appropriately paced and tailored to individual needs.
- Teachers will use a range of high quality resources, including multi-media.
- Alongside formal lessons, teachers will use every opportunity to exploit the local environment, enabling students to be active and curious learners.

These principles mean that students should feel that attending school is purposeful, relevant and interesting,

Parents and Carers play a key part in promoting good attendance to their children. On an ongoing basis they can help by:

- Speaking positively about school and all the opportunities offered
- Encouraging participation in lessons and other activities
- Showing an interest in their child's learning
- Attending reviews

If attendance deteriorates, parents and carers can help by:

- Talking to their child to find out if they have any new worries
- Contacting the school to discuss attendance with their child's tutor.
- Passing on any relevant details about circumstances that may be impacting on attendance.
- Supporting their child to establish good routines for bedtimes and mornings

Any health concerns should be referred to the GP, or other health professionals already working with the child.

3. Recording and Reporting

KS3 (Surbiton) KS4 (Dukes Centre) and NJ

Reception staff (at NJ either Head of Tuition or Deputy) will complete the register as students arrive in school.

If a student has not arrived within 30 minutes of their start time, reception staff will send a text in the first instance and then follow this up with a phone call within the first hour.

Every effort will be made to contact parents/carers to alert them that their child has not arrived, and a note placed on SIMS to record texts and phone calls made

Once a parent has informed the school of the reason for absence, reception staff will make a note on SIMS.

If a student is subject to a Child Protection Plan, reception staff will contact the allocated social worker to alert them and make a note that this has been done on SIMS. On an individual basis, the police may also be informed.

The same reporting and recording procedures apply if a student leaves school without permission.

Tuition in a community setting

Tutors will inform the Head or Deputy Head of Tuition if a student has not arrived for their session within 20 minutes of the start time. The Head or Deputy Head of Tuition will send a text to parents in the first instance and then follow this up with a phone call within the first hour.

Every effort will be made to contact parents/carers to alert them that their child has not arrived, and a note placed on SIMS to record texts and phone calls made

Once a parent has informed the school of the reason for absence, the Head or Deputy Head of Tuition will make a note on SIMS.

If a student is subject to a Child Protection Plan, the Head or Deputy Head of Tuition will contact the allocated social worker to alert them and make a note that this has been done on SIMS. On an individual basis, the police may also be informed.

If a student arrives late, but within 30 minutes, the tutor will inform the Head or Deputy Head of Tuition after the end of the session.

The same reporting and recording procedures apply if a student leaves a session without permission.

Tuition in the home

If a tutor arrives at the home and is informed by a parent that the session will not take place, they should contact the Head or Deputy head of Tuition and they will record the reason on SIMS.

If a tutor arrives at the home and there is no response, they should contact Dukes Centre reception staff who will try to contact the parent.

The same attendance codes apply to students who are receiving medical tuition, but they will be marked as a 'D' for the sessions that they are not timetabled for tuition. Medical students are now entered in on a separate SIMS rather than the one used by the rest of the schools..

If a student does not attend their medical tuition session for 3 consecutive days without an authorised reason, the tuition will be suspended until a meeting can be arranged with the school the student is dual-registered with. Unless infectious, illness will not be authorised, since the tuition is designed to be appropriate for students who are too unwell to attend school.

4. Monitoring and review

On a daily basis:

- Form tutors @ KS3, KS4 and KS5 will check their own students' attendance and contact parents to discuss any urgent issues, or else incorporate into the weekly phone call.
- Heads of provision (KS3, KS4 & Tuition) will check that all students in their provision have been correctly recorded on the register and all contact reported. They will liaise with form tutors regarding further contact with parents.
- Heads of provision will check whether any student has been absent for 6 days without contact and if so, complete a CME referral.

On a weekly basis:

- Form tutors @KS3, KS4 and KS5 will have regular conversations with each student, showing them their attendance certificate and setting targets for improvement where necessary. They will explore any underlying reasons for their absences. This might

include conducting an audit of the 4 As with the student. Are there any areas in which there are gaps?

Example – The tutor discovers that the student has a lower sense of **attachment** to the school since their best friend moved on to a new school.

Action – the tutor speaks to lunchtime supervising staff to ask them to facilitate interaction between the student and other peers.

Example – the tutor finds out that the student has started missing Tuesdays and Thursdays because they have fallen behind with their art coursework, so they are avoiding those lessons, as they fear that they will not **achieve** the grade they are capable of.

Action – the tutor speaks to the art teacher to gather more information about the timescales involved and then makes a plan with the student so that they feel that they can complete the work needed.

- Form tutors @KS3, KS4 and KS5 will contact parents to have a telephone conversation. This may include congratulating improved attendance or discussing attendance concerns. Tutors may also ask the parents if they can speak to the student on the phone if they have not been attending, so that they can let the student know that they are missed, encourage them to return and ask if there are any issues they need to know about.
- Form tutors @ KS3, KS4 and KS5 will invite parents in where additional support is required. The Attendance Toolkit (Appendix II) includes many activities and ideas that can form the basis of discussion.
- Form tutors @ KS3, KS4 and KS5 may use other strategies, particularly visuals such as wall charts, to promote and support good attendance,
- The Head of Tuition will contact any parents where attendance is a concern. Where 3 medical sessions have been missed without authorised reasons, tuition will be suspended until a meeting with the student's mainstream school can be arranged.

Half-termly

- Attendance is routinely discussed with parents/carers at the student's half-termly review and targets set.
- The SLT lead for each provision will arrange meetings with students and parents/carers where the steps taken by form tutors have not yet resulted in improvements. The Attendance Toolkit provides suggestions of approaches that can be taken.
- Where relevant, the SLT lead, or the SENCo, will liaise with outside agencies such as **CAMHS, the Emotional Health Service, School Health or other relevant professionals** to obtain advice and guidance regarding students' health needs and how these impact on attendance.

When it is apparent that students are not attending because they have little or no engagement with their current provision, the different Heads of School will liaise and create a re-engagement plan. This may include access to one of more off-site providers and/or 1:1 learning opportunities in the community. The aim will always be to re-engage students in the formal school setting when they are ready.

The SLT lead for attendance will meet weekly with the Local Authority's Education Welfare Officer to discuss any students who have not responded to the steps taken internally by the school as outlined above. As a result of these discussions, more formal actions may be taken, such as:

- Formal letter from the Education Welfare Officer
- Invitation to a meeting with the Education Welfare Officer
- Attendance contracts with the school and Educational Welfare service which are reviewed at subsequent meetings.

The following actions are rarely implemented, since re-engagement plans will always be explored in the first instance. However, they remain part of the graduated response to attendance issues. Ultimately we want all students to benefit from the wide range of educational opportunities afforded by Malden Oaks:

- Fixed Penalty Notice
- 1st court warning
- 2nd court warning
- Court proceedings

Links to statutory guidance:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1039223/School_attendance_guidance_for_2021_to_2022_academic_year.pdf

Appendix I

Attendance Codes

The school has a legal duty to record students' attendance. Here is a guide to the most commonly used codes. Please note that these are legal codes that cannot be changed by the school.

Authorised Absence: Code 'C'

This is when a student's absence is unavoidable and for an authorised reason. The decision to authorise will be taken by each Head of Provision and verified by the Headteacher.

Example of authorised absence:

- Funeral of close family member

III: Code 'I'

This is when a student is so unwell that they cannot leave the house to attend school. Examples include:

- Infectious illnesses including diarrhoea and vomiting
- An illness that is certified by the GP as meaning that the student is too unwell to attend school

Medical appointment: Code 'M'

This is for medical appointments that cannot be arranged outside of school hours such as hospital appointments with consultants.

CAMHS or other therapy appointments should be arranged around students' timetables where possible.

Dentist/Optician appointments should be arranged for holidays or after school.

Unauthorised absence: Code 'O'

This is an absence that does not meet the criteria for being authorised.

Examples of unauthorised absence:

- Being tired / waking up late
- Having a headache
- Having a bad day
- Getting hair cut
- Going to the dentist
- Not having suitable clothing for the weather
- Looking after other children
- Day trips
- Lost oyster card

Late: Code 'L'

Student arrives within 30 minutes of their start time.

Unauthorised Late: Code 'U'

Student arrives 30 minutes or more after their start time.

This counts as an absence for the session concerned.

Dual-registered: Code 'D'

This is when a student is due to attend another school that they are dual-registered with.

Educated off site: Code 'B'

This is when a student is due to attend education at another venue eg a college course

Authorised holiday: Code 'H' and Unauthorised holiday: Code 'G'

Holidays can only be authorised by the Headteacher and in exceptional circumstances. Regardless of the circumstances, no holiday can be authorised for a student whose attendance over the most recent 12 months has been less than 90%

Not timetabled to attend (post 16) 'X'

This is when post 16 students are not required to be in school and can study at home.

Sending work home

In general, work will not be sent home for students. If students are well enough to do school work, they should be in school. The only exception would be in the case of infectious illnesses (e.g. Chickenpox). In this case, after checking with the SLT lead for the provision, the form tutor will ensure that all subject staff are alerted to provide work on google classroom

Appendix II

Attendance Toolkit

1. Advice for Parents

My child is anxious and not attending school, how can I help?

Information for parents/carers

Facts

- Most children worry about school at some time or another
- There are times when they would prefer to stay at home
- You may have had similar feelings when you were at school.

As a parent/carer you could help. Ask them whether there is anything worrying them, e.g:

- At home - changes, family life
- At school – worried about their school work or the school environment
- Difficulties with friendships/ relationships.

Once they share the problem, you may be able to resolve it early. On the other hand, you may feel you would like some support.

Signs of anxiety affecting school attendance

- Stomach aches
- Headaches
- Feels sick and/or is sick when it's time to go to school
- Tries to stay in bed

- Is tearful or unhappy
- Is 'ill' following weekends and holidays
- Doesn't want to leave you.

What you can do

- Stay calm
- Listen to your child
- Acknowledge the anxiety
- Reassure and encourage them

Check there is no obvious underlying reason, e.g.:

friendship difficulties, not being able to do the work, or a health problem

- Find someone to talk to – a friend or a member of your family
- Tell the school there is a problem
- Work in partnership with the school to try to get your child to attend
- Keep in constant touch with the school
- Respond positively to any suggestions.

What can you expect the school to do?

- Listen to you and your child
- Make constructive suggestions
- Hold meetings to plan and review progress
- Try to find ways of making school a happier experience for your child
- Continue to monitor attendance
- Suggest that they refer you and your child to other professionals if the problem persists
- Re-introduce your child back into school with adjustments to their timetable if appropriate.

Others who can help in and out of school

Members of your family - encourage other members of the family to help integrate your child into school.

Your child's friends - involve their friends, try to get one of them to call and collect her/him on the way to school.

Points to remember

- Progress may be slow.
- Be persistent and remain positive about school to your child.
- Work in partnership with the school and other professionals.
- Let your child know that you are all working together to help.
- Try to remain focussed on the issue in hand. Do not worry too much about other issues going on in the school, e.g.: exams, coursework, deadlines, etc.

For further information and advice contact

- your child's tutor at school
- your local health centre or doctor

